

A Declaration of Ideals and Policy Looking Toward a Warless World



*A Program Adopted by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America
by action of the Executive Committee
December 16, 1921*

THE Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America records on behalf of the churches their solemn and reverent thanksgiving to God for the Conference on Limitation of Armament. In it we recognize His answer to the fervent prayers of millions of Christians throughout this and many other lands.

We rejoice in the splendid achievements of the Conference already secured. They are, however, but the first steps toward a warless world. We must press forward toward the goal which the Prince of Peace Himself has set before us. With a view to that goal, it is fitting that we should at this time make the following declaration:

We realize that as churches it is not for us to define in detail the political methods and institutions by which the scourge of war shall be banished forever from civilized and Christian nations. The determination of such details must be left to statesmen, jurists and legislators.

But we maintain with firm conviction that it is the right and the duty of the churches to declare in no doubtful terms the moral principles that are involved in international life, and to insist that our lawmakers and all those who represent our nation in its international relations, shall observe these principles with utmost care. We insist that the main issue shall be neither evaded nor obscured by discussion of details.

We hold that the moral principles of international life are the most important of all the so-called "vital interests" of every nation. They are of such consequence to the life of churches and nations that every congregation of every church in every land should co-operate for their realization. The World War was won only by international unity of purpose and action. A Warless World can be achieved only by like unity of millions of peace-makers.

We recognize with deep satisfaction the new spirit of unity and mutual consideration that has sprung up between the nations represented at the conference. This spirit we regard as of greater importance and as giving more hope for the future than any of the specific agreements.

The Conference on Limitation of Armament has indeed made a good beginning. We deeply rejoice in the agreements for a radical reduction of navies, for the ten-year naval holiday, for the ten-year four-power agreement to maintain peace in the Pacific, and for the steps taken looking toward a real solution of China's pressing problems.

But as a nation we must press on to matters of still greater importance and still more serious difficulty. Capital ships have largely lost their significance. Provision has not yet been made for the general reduction of land armament. Chemical and aeroplane and submarine warfare threatens the world. These new weapons have created new problems for the entire world of the gravest character. How can they be abolished, or even limited, so long as war and preparation for war are recognized as legitimate methods by which civilized peoples may seek to secure their national objectives? *War itself must be outlawed.*

We believe there is one way and only one way to outlaw war. We must first establish a peace system. Mere disarmament by itself alone will not stop war. Only the firm establishment of the institutions and agencies of justice and of liberty under law, maintained by effective sanctions at the hands of law-abiding and peace-loving nations, can possibly banish war from this war-cursed world. The most urgent need of mankind today is the speedy establishment of international institutions to assure equal

justice, full security and fair economic opportunity for all nations alike. These are essential pre-requisites to permanent peace.

We believe that the United States has moral obligations to the nations of Europe. Neither France nor any other nation should ever be exposed to the wrong and the tragedy of invasion. We believe that adequate protection can be given to nations only by effective international guarantees.

We believe that peculiar duties and responsibilities rest upon Christians in this and all other lands for

the establishment of the institutions of peace. It is for Christian pastors and preachers everywhere to teach these truths to the people and through the Grace of God to create that heart and that will in each nation, without which disarmament is only a beautiful rainbow in the sky and a warless world is impossible.

In the light of these considerations, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America adopts for itself and recommends to the churches the following statement of ideals, of policy and of program:

I. International Ideals of the Churches of Christ

1. WE BELIEVE that nations no less than individuals are subject to God's immutable moral laws.
2. WE BELIEVE that nations achieve true welfare, greatness and honor only through just dealing and unselfish service.
3. WE BELIEVE that nations that regard themselves as Christian have special international obligations.
4. WE BELIEVE that the spirit of Christian brotherliness can remove every unjust barrier of trade, color, creed and race.
5. WE BELIEVE that CHRISTIAN patriotism demands the practice of good-will between nations.
6. WE BELIEVE that international policies should secure equal justice for all races.
7. WE BELIEVE that all nations should associate themselves permanently for world peace and good-will.
8. WE BELIEVE in international law, and in the universal use of international courts of justice and boards of arbitration.
9. WE BELIEVE in a sweeping reduction of armaments by all nations.
10. WE BELIEVE in a warless world, and dedicate ourselves to its achievement.

II. The Obligation of America to Cooperate in the Establishment of a World Peace System

1. We believe that the government of the United States should associate itself promptly with the other nations of the world to establish permanent institutions for the formulation of international law, for the effective operation of the International Court of Justice and of boards of arbitration and conciliation, for the assurance to law-abiding and peace-loving nations of security from attack and spoliation by any lawless and aggressive nation, and for the provision of fair treatment and equal economic opportunity to all.

2. We believe that only by these institutions and agencies will it be possible and practicable to abolish the menace to the entire human race of submarines, of aeroplanes, and of poison gases.

3. We believe, further, that the reconstruction of the shattered institutions of production, of exchange, of trade, and of credit, all so essential to the peace and prosperity of the nations, is possible only when the feverish fears and preparations for possible war are completely abandoned because of the successful functioning of the institutions of an effective world peace system.

4. We take the above stand remembering:

- a. That practically every important nation in the world has committed itself to the idea of a permanent organization of the nations for world peace, and many of them have associated themselves in a League of Nations for that purpose.

b. That President Harding has repeatedly committed himself and his administration to a permanent association of the nations for world peace, renewed in his recent address at the opening of the Washington Conference in the memorable words that the United States co-operating with other nations, desires "to do that nobler thing which no nation can do alone."

5. We believe that the time has come for American public opinion to express unmistakably to Congress its emphatic support of President Harding and of the Administration in making adequate pledges and in giving satisfactory guarantees that the United States will take its full share of responsibility in international tasks and obligations.

6. We reject with indignation a policy of taking all possible economic advantages in all parts of the world while shirking international responsibilities and obligations.

7. We advocate the foregoing policy, remembering the numerous actions of the Federal Council from its very inception in 1905, and repeated at practically every annual meeting since, urging the creation of a permanent organization of the nations for world peace, which policy has also been repeatedly expressed in numberless actions of our constituent bodies during the past decade.

III. America's Obligations to Single Nations

1. To Armenian and Greek Christians:

In view of the tragic conditions of Armenian and Greek Christians under cruel and murderous rulers, and of numerous appeals to America for political protection and philanthropic help; and in view of the proposal in Congress that President Harding take up with Great Britain, France and Italy the question of dealing effectively with the Turkish maltreatment of Christian subjects.

We urge the churches of America to exert every possible influence:

(1) To secure immediate active measures by our government for the protection of Christians under Turkish rule.

(2) To provide contributions needful for the physical wants of those threatened with starvation in the Near East.

(3) To promote a National Service of Prayer in all our churches until permanent protection is secured for Christians under Turkish rule.

2. To Russia:

Because of the fearful famine in Russia and in response to the appeal of Mr. Hoover, approved by

President Harding, we urge the churches and Christians of America to make generous and early response to the pitiful calls from Russia for gifts of food, clothing and medicine.

This, however, is a case in which private philanthropy is wholly inadequate. We therefore earnestly urge Congress to take the necessary action by which the United States as a nation may become a good Samaritan.

3. To Austria:

Austria incurred a debt to the United States immediately after the Armistice of \$24,000,000 for the purchase of food in America. One step immediately pressing for saving Austria from complete dissolution appears to be at least an extension of time for the payment of her international debts. The nations of Europe have consented to a twenty-year delay in her debt payments provided America will do the same.

We therefore urge that our government unite at once with the other nations for helping Austria by such methods as shall save this suffering nation.

IV. America's Obligations to Her Associates in the Late War

In view of the enormous losses of life and property incurred by the nations associated with the United States in the late war, during the period when the United States was preparing to do her part; and in view of the fact that the sums loaned to them by the United States were expended in this country for food and ammunition by which they were enabled to continue the struggle until America was duly equipped.

We believe that under suitable conditions, each case being handled by itself, the dictates of justice and the principles of economic law require that the United States should consider and adopt some suitable adjustment of these debts of the nations to the United States in order that they shall be as far as possible relieved from their economic difficulties.

V. America's Obligations to Aid in the Economic Recovery of the World

Because of the World War the United States became in a moment of time the most powerful and the richest of all the nations. But power and wealth bring special opportunities and responsibilities. The recovery of economic stability by the nations of the world and especially of Europe depends, we are assured, largely on what America does or fails to do.

We therefore ask that the United States unite in an economic conference of the leading nations to do in the realm of industry and finance what has been so well done by the Washington Conference in the realm of political understanding and in the reduction of armaments.

VI. America's Obligations to Germany

If American Christians are earnest in their desire to have a Christian world order, a peace system to take the place of the old war system, we must ourselves have a Christian spirit toward the peoples of every land.

The Christians and Churches of America should enter into the fullest possible fraternal relations with our Christian brethren in Germany, as Christians de-

termined to join in rebuilding our shattered world on new and better foundations.

We recommend, accordingly, that the Administrative Committee be authorized to prepare a suitable communication to the Churches and Christians of Germany on behalf of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, expressing our desire for renewed friendship and co-operation in our common task.

VII. America's Treaty Obligations

In International Relations nothing is more important than scrupulous observance of treaty obligations.

We insist that the terms of our treaties should be faithfully and honorably observed. If the treaties are not satisfactory, new treaties should be adopted.

We condemn all proposals to change or annul existing treaties by mere Congressional legislation. These principles should be applied to proposals regarding the use of the Panama Canal, to our dealings with Chinese in the United States, and to all similar questions.

VIII. Great Britain and Ireland

In view of the proposals of the British Government to solve the Irish question by the magnanimous establishment of a dominion form of Government, we recommend that the Administrative Committee of the

Federal Council be requested to send as soon as the Act has been ratified, cablegrams of congratulation to Prime Minister Mr. Lloyd George, and to the official head of the new Irish Government.

IX. The Duty of the Churches

To carry out effectively the practical international program, sketched in the foregoing sections, we urge:

1. That each constituent body of the Federal Council establish its own official Committee on International Justice and Goodwill for co-operation with this Commission of the Federal Council.

2. That each City Federation of Churches establish its department of International Justice and Goodwill for similar co-operation.

3. That Theological Schools and Seminaries be urged by their denominational authorities to provide adequate courses for their students in international problems and their solution as essential parts of their

theological instruction, and to open special short courses for laymen, equipping them for public work in the new realm of endeavor for establishing the Kingdom of God on Earth as it is in Heaven.

That all organizations within or affiliated with the Churches be requested earnestly to promote the use of suitable study courses on the Kingdom of God in international relations.

That the Administrative Committee provide in due time for strong committees of American Christians to visit Christian leaders and groups in all lands to set forth the imperative need of international Christian co-operation in the establishment of adequate institutions of peace for the whole world.